

Teresa Feeney
AT&T Customer Care
100 S. Jefferson Street, Suite 115
New Castle, PA 16101

Dear Ms. Feeney:

PROVIDING SPEECH TO SPEECH

I live in Rhode Island and am asking AT&T to make telephones accessible to people with speech disabilities by establishing Speech to Speech and an effective STS outreach service. I urge your company to comply with FCC Regulations and provide STS in Rhode Island by March 2001.

In California, people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because of STS. One example is Dr. Robert Aber who experienced great growth in his psychology practice once he was able to communicate with clients over STS. Writer Pam Hoyer advanced her writing career substantially using STS to gather facts for articles. Dr Bob Segalman became successful as a social activist helping people with speech disabilities once he began using STS. STS potentially answers the telecommunications needs of thousands of people.

PROVIDING STS OUTREACH

Providing outreach appropriate to a particular user population is a prerequisite to access. When people with speech disabilities have appropriate training to use STS, they become more independent, participate more in the community, get jobs etc. The new relay regulations require states to contract with relay providers so that STS is accessible to users with speech disabilities. Providing outreach appropriate to a particular user population is a prerequisite to access.

If AT&T provides STS without appropriate outreach, call volumes will be extremely low. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Failure to provide appropriate outreach for STS likely means Rhode Island residents with speech disabilities will not enter the mainstream of life.

cc Hunt 98-67
and
cc 90-571
NOV 27 P 11
H1

Because I want this independence for people with speech disabilities in Rhode Island, I strongly urge you to provide an STS outreach service similar to the very successful STS intensive outreach services in California, Minnesota and Maryland.

FUNDING STS OUTREACH

Such a service may cost only \$50,000 annually because of Rhode Island's low population.. Many states have sufficient surcharge money to fund a \$50,000 STS outreach service without difficulty. It may be possible to use vocational rehabilitation client services money to teach people to use STS as it fosters independence and makes people job ready.

CONCLUSION

A large proportion of people with speech disabilities have other disabilities as well; this makes it very difficult for them to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that services like STS outreach are adequately provided for.

Again, I strongly urge you to budget for an effective STS outreach service with a budget of about \$50,000 annually..

Sincerely,

Melissa Gardner

SIGNATURE: *Melissa Gardner*

ADDRESS: *46 Indian Trail*

CITY, STATE, ZIP: *Charlestown, R.I. 02813*

DATE: *November 20, 2000*

cc: Disability Rights Office
Consumer Information Bureau
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW

Washington, DC 20554

cc: James Lanni
Public Utility Commission
100 Orange Street
Providence, RI 02903

cc: Bob Segalman, Ph.D.
Department of Rehabilitation
Att: Program Evaluation
2000 Evergreen Street
Sacramento, CA 95815

John and Melissa Gardner
46 Indian Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813



Disability Rights Office
Consumer Information Bureau
Federal Communications Commission,
Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED
NOV 27 2000
FCC MAIL ROOM

